



Region 10 seeking OCHP funding for pesticide exposure investigation for Triangle Lake, Oregon

Scott Downey to: Peter Grevatt, Khesha Reed

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Cc: Matthew Davis, Margo Young, Juliann Barta, Jill Bloom, Joel Wolf

Bcc: Sheila Fleming, Elizabeth Allen, Kay Morrison, Linda Liu, Alan Henning, Schulze.Chad

Peter and Khesha - I am following up on an initial inquiry to you from Margo Young who is out this week. She asked that we provide some additional background information on this issue.

Background

Region 10 and Oregon state agencies have been hearing anecdotal concerns and complaints for several years from residents living in rural communities throughout the Oregon Coastal Range about spray drift exposures to herbicides that are applied by helicopters on steep terrain as part of private industrial forestry activities.

About four years ago, an advocacy group called The Pitchfork Rebellion was formed by residents in the Triangle Lake area west of Eugene to raise awareness and demand that government respond to their concerns. In February 2010, The Pitchfork Rebellion submitted a petition to the EPA Administrator requesting that EPA establish immediate protective buffer zones around the pesticide application areas and that we conduct a "pesticide drift study" that would confirm the alleged exposures.

Although not legally obligated, the EPA Office of Pesticide Programs (OPP) decided to open a docket on the petition and received about 200 public comments. OPP has not yet formally responded to the petition as it is related to other pesticide drift petitions from Earth Justice and Farmworker Justice and with a new Spray Drift Policy that they are working on. Jill Bloom and Joel Wolf are the OPP contacts.

Meanwhile, Region 10 has been very active in trying to investigate and better understand the concerns. In June 2010, Regional staff planned and participated in a local listening tour and met with various interested and affected stakeholders, including Oregon agencies, timber company representatives, and community members. A trip report was prepared that documented the concerns we heard.

As we could not rule out the claims of exposures and health effects, we referred the matter to our regional ATSDR office for further investigation in Sept 2010.

In March 2011, the Pitchfork Rebellion revealed that a very credible scientist, Dr. Dana Barr from Emory University (a former CDC Lab Director), had analyzed urine samples for 21 community members (including children) and all had elevated levels of two herbicides (2, 4-D and Atrazine) both before the spray season began and then at higher levels after spray events.

In response, the Region has formed a work group and is working closely with several Oregon agencies, ATSDR, and OPP. In the long term, OPP can revise pesticide labels to require more protective application practices, but in the short-term, we are trying to determine the nature and extent of the pesticide exposures.

A multi-agency Exposure Investigation has been designed and field work is starting later this month to collect samples of residents drinking water, locally-grown/consumed food sources, and urine.

Request

A missing but critical and unfunded part of the investigation is to look at the potential route of pesticide exposure through air. Our technical staff, along with ATSDR, believe this exposure route needs to be investigated. This is also a primary concern of the residents as expressed at a local community meeting we held where 140 people participated. Unfortunately, none of the agencies involved in the study (Region 10, ATSDR, several state agencies, or OPP) has been able to fund the air sampling.

EPA Region 10 wants to obtain and analyze at least 25 air samples at an estimated cost of \$12,000.

If you have any available funds for this part of the investigation, please let us know. We see a strong connection between conducting this assessment in the community and protecting children's health. If OCHP has less than \$12,000 available we can reduce the number of samples. We appreciate your consideration of this matter.

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Scott Downey, Manager  
Pesticides and Toxics Unit  
US EPA Region 10  
1200 6th Ave, Suite 900, OCE-084  
Seattle, WA 98101-3140  
(206) 553-0682